



## Global citizenship as education for peacebuilding in a divided society: structural and contextual constraints on the development of critical dialogic discourse in schools.

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**Global citizenship as education for peacebuilding in a divided society: Structural and contextual constraints on the development of critical dialogic discourse in schools**

**Jacqueline Reilly & Ulrike Niens**

## **Abstract**

In post-conflict and divided societies, global citizenship education has been described as a central element of peacebuilding education whereby critical pedagogy is seen as a tool to advance students' thinking, transform their views and promote democratic behaviours. The present study investigates understandings of and attitudes to global citizenship and the challenges faced in its implementation. Teacher interviews highlight lack of time and resources for critical reflection and dialogue. Where opportunities for relevant training are provided, this can benefit critical engagement. Boundaries of educational systems and structures also influence pupils' understandings of the issues as evidenced in questionnaire findings. We argue that critical pedagogies may be limited unless criticality and activism transcend local and global issues and are applied to schools themselves. Emotional engagement may be required for teachers to claim the space to critically reflect and share with colleagues within and beyond their sectors in order to enable critical discourse amongst pupils.

**Keywords:** global citizenship education; peace education; peacebuilding; dialogic discourse; critical reflection; divided societies; controversial issues

## **Introduction**

Education for peacebuilding, which goes beyond the cessation of violence and conflict and addresses structural and cultural violence, emphasises the concepts of local and global peace. While Fraser (2005) relates peacebuilding to specific concepts such as economic redistribution, cultural recognition and political representation, Reardon (1988, XII) argues that “comprehensive peace education, then, also means global education” and education for “responsible global citizenship” (Reardon & Snauwaert 2011, 2). Global citizenship education could then be defined as education which aims to enable students to challenge power imbalances, negotiate identities and, ultimately, to achieve greater equality, justice, democracy and peace via individual and societal transformation (Nussbaum 1997). As such it entails transformative social and political learning, which Reardon (2009) argues is best achieved by Freirean dialogic methods of education, informed by a philosophical understanding of education as humanisation.

While dialogic pedagogies may have a major influence on approaches to peacebuilding and global citizenship education in practice, empirical research focussing on teachers’ and pupils’ understandings has been scarce, especially in relation to post-conflict societies (Quaynor 2012). Additionally, questions have been raised in relation to potential limitations of such educational initiatives where they are being implemented in segregated settings. This paper therefore aimed to address this gap in the literature in the context of Northern Ireland as a divided society emerging from past conflict and maintaining a segregated education system.

Shapiro (2002) highlights the potential of humanising education to promote equal and fair societies, especially post-conflict, and to enable individuals to appreciate diversity and their common humanity. Advocates of global citizenship thus place importance on humanisation and its potential for a unifying identity (Appiah 2006). Nussbaum (1996)

suggests that global citizenship education, which emphasises responsibility to humankind and shared values, may be the foundation to transcend inequalities and injustice at global, national and local levels, and thus to build and maintain sustainable peace. The potential for global citizenship education to contribute to the development of long-term peace and to overcome community divisions is particularly important in post-conflict societies (Davies 2005), where “the concept of [national] citizenship must be regarded as problematic and contested from the outset” (Smith 2003, 24). In such societies local identities are often used to reinforce community boundaries and supported by divergent collective memories (Conway 2003). As such, peacebuilding initiatives may be seen as attempts to dilute and de-value community identities. Delanty (2006) proposes that critical cosmopolitanism should be based on “internal cognitive transformation” and does not require a global identity but should rather be rooted in social, cultural and national identities. However, an emphasis on these identities in post-conflict societies may be detrimental to the potential for global citizenship to bridge community divisions; therefore balancing local and global identities through critical pedagogical discourse seems crucial in such contexts. Indeed, it has been suggested to focus on deconstructing identities (Bekerman & Zembylas 2012) by means of critical reflection on one’s own culture and perspective taking of the ‘other’ (Turner 2002), whereby global citizenship could facilitate the formation of an overarching humanising identity that bridges community divisions. While some have criticised the very concept of global citizenship as utopian and impractical (Heater 2004) or questioned its universal inclusiveness (Marshall 2009), others have considered the challenges in implementing global citizenship education in ways which may effectively enable individual and societal transformation, in line with Freirean propositions of critical pedagogy.

Freire (1996) argues for a three-pronged approach to critical pedagogy aimed at societal transformation, involving critical reflection, dialogue and action. Dialogue and

subsequent action are rooted in critical thinking, which involves a sense of common humanity, understanding of reality as ever-changing and moral courage to challenge inequalities and oppression. Critical reflection thus delves beneath surface meanings, to try to uncover root causes of oppression and ways to confront it, in turn leading to humanisation. In educational contexts, Giroux (1983) explains that critical pedagogy includes not only critical thinking, but also active participation, engagement with identities through the development of individuals' autobiographies, consideration of common human values, learning about inequalities and oppression and developing the skills to challenge these. Giroux (1983) argues that critical pedagogy needs to be underpinned by an emotional engagement and optimism in order for it to be transformative. Emotional engagement has been similarly highlighted in global citizenship education by Davies (2006) who claimed that "outrage" was required to motivate change.

Critical pedagogy within global citizenship education poses its own challenges, especially regarding the concept of local and global interdependence, its disputed root causes and how these can be addressed (Andreotti 2006; Roman 2003). For teachers in post-conflict societies, additional difficulties arise, whether they focus on the local level, where divergent identities need to be negotiated, or on the global level, where divergent North/South agendas and Western values need to be analysed (Bickmore 2007).

Despite the move away from a banking approach to education, where pupils are regarded as passive recipients of knowledge (Freire 1970), to more student-centred and participatory pedagogies, tensions remain between reproductive and transformative agendas of global citizenship education (Johnson & Morris 2010). Within post-conflict societies concerns have been raised about the potential reproduction of societal divisions through the education system, official and hidden curricula (Gallagher 2005a) whereby local and global citizenship education has been under particular scrutiny (Smith 2010).

Based on theoretical and empirical research in the Netherlands, Veugelers (2011a) suggested that global citizenship education is indeed implemented differently in differing educational contexts. Analysing teacher interview data about understandings and practices relating to global citizenship education, he identified three main categories of global citizenship education; open, moral and social-political. Open global citizenship was found to result from teachers' understanding that globalisation required pupils to acquire knowledge about other cultures and to be open to new experiences. Moral global citizenship centred around appreciation of difference and diversity, increasing opportunities and taking responsibility towards humanity, at both local and global levels. The third category, which resonates strongly with Freirean principles of societal transformation, involves critical understanding of social-political relationships and challenging inequalities. Most teachers in this study opted for moral global citizenship and appeared reluctant to engage with social-political issues. Veugelers acknowledges divergent interpretations of global citizenship and argues for a multiple perspective approach incorporating all three understandings in order for students to develop their own perspectives. Noting social and cultural segregation in the Dutch education system, Veugelers cautions that while links between school and community are clearly important, orientation to the plural society and widening horizons are necessary in order to avoid reinforcing community identities and to develop shared and humanising discourses across community boundaries.

### **Theoretical framework**

In the light of the above, the theoretical framework for this research draws on literature relating to critical pedagogies in peacebuilding and global citizenship education. In particular, we aimed to explore how Freirean principles of critical reflection, dialogue and action are evidenced in teachers' and pupils' reported understandings of global citizenship education in the context of a post-conflict society. In addition, based on work by Nussbaum (1996, 1997) and others, issues of local and global

identities were explored and self-reported attitudes towards diversity and global inter-dependence examined. Finally, we aimed to discover the extent to which global citizenship education in a post-conflict society maps on to Veugelers' (2011b) open, moral, and social-political categories.

Given the paucity of empirical evidence on dialogic pedagogies and global citizenship in the context of peacebuilding education (Quaynor 2012), this paper, drawing on analysis of both teacher and pupil data, will contribute to contemporary debates on dialogic pedagogy, global citizenship and peacebuilding by exploring and comparing teachers' discourses and pupils' understandings of global citizenship in the context of a post-conflict society. Veuglers (2011b) suggests that educational segregation and the potential for subsequent differential implementation of global citizenship may impede a positive impact on pupils, and more broadly on societal cohesion, even in the context of a relatively peaceful society such as the Netherlands. This paper thus aimed to explore how such concerns may be reflected in the context of a post-conflict and divided society. The research questions were:

- How do teacher and pupil understandings of and attitudes to global citizenship reflect Freirean concepts of critical reflection, dialogue and action?
- What roles do humanisation and emotional engagement play in teachers' conceptualisations of global citizenship education and to what extent is this reflected in pupils' understandings and attitudes?
- Do approaches to global citizenship education map onto Veugelers' categorisation and do they vary systematically by school sector? To what extent are potential variations reflected in pupils' understandings and attitudes?

## **Context**



The research was conducted in Northern Ireland as a relevant case study to examine global citizenship education in the context of a post-conflict and divided society. After a long history of identity-based conflict (Muldoon et al. 2007) between Catholics/Nationalists/Republicans, of whom the majority wish for unification with the Republic of Ireland, and Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists, of whom the majority wish to remain part of the United Kingdom (Cairns and Darby 1998), Northern Ireland underwent a peace process which culminated in the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Despite decreased political violence, social segregation persists (Nolan 2012). The education system remains divided at Primary and Post-Primary levels; the majority of Protestant pupils attend 'Controlled' schools whilst the majority of Catholic pupils attend 'Maintained' schools, with about 5% attending 'Integrated' schools (Department of Education 2011). In contrast to Controlled and Maintained schools, Integrated schools are integrated by religion, gender and achievement. A few schools at both levels teach in the Irish medium, with mostly Catholic pupils.

All main education sectors, although differing in terms of management structure and ethos, receive full government funding and employ the same curriculum (Smith 2001). Issues relating to peacebuilding and citizenship, including local and global interconnections, equality and social justice and democracy and active participation, are particularly evident in Local and Global Citizenship education in post-primary schools as well as in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and the World Around us in the Primary Curriculum, although they are intended to infuse all subject areas (CCEA 2007a, 2007b).

## **Research methods**

The current paper is based on data collected as part of a project which monitored and evaluated the global dimension in Northern Ireland schools. We draw on qualitative data

from teacher focus groups and interviews, supported by quantitative findings from a pupil questionnaire to facilitate data triangulation as proposed by mixed method researchers (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004).

Nine focus groups with teachers (not necessarily specialised in teaching global issues) included two to 16 participants in each group. The purposive sample comprised Primary (N=4) and Post-Primary schools (N=5), from the main education sectors (including Controlled, Maintained, Integrated and one Irish Medium school) and schools situated in both urban and rural areas. Follow up focus groups were held in seven of these schools at the end of the school year to assess changes which might impact on views and practices.

Similarly purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants to 17 semi-structured interviews with teachers responsible for the delivery of local and global citizenship, and 18 follow up interviews were conducted (in one school, two teachers held the post and both participated at follow-up). Focus groups and interviews with teachers took 30-90 minutes.

Finally, a questionnaire survey was completed by 401 pupils from 22 schools across Northern Ireland, again representing all main education sectors (see Niens & Reilly 2010 for the full research report). This sample included 141 males (35%) and 260 females (65%).

The study was approved by the School of Education's Research Ethics Committee at Queen's University Belfast. Schools were initially approached in writing and, once the principal had agreed, informed consent was obtained from teachers as well as all parents and pupils in identified Year 5 and Year 9 classes (8-9 and 12-13 years old).

Questions for teacher focus groups and interviews explored training, support and resources as well as understandings of key elements of the global dimension including global

citizenship, the challenges they faced in implementation and whether or not they saw these as particular given the context of past conflict.

Qualitative data were transcribed and analysed thematically; themes were initially developed independently by each of the two researchers and then synthesised in an iterative process of discussion, theoretical reflection, searching for counter-examples and re-writing, until consensus was reached. In the following section, we provide an indepth account (Braun and Clarke 2006) of a theoretically derived set of sub-themes, namely understandings of, and attitudes to, global citizenship and the challenges faced in the implementation of it.

The pupil questionnaire<sup>1</sup> entailed demographic questions and items relevant to global citizenship (e.g. attitudes to diversity and the environment, current and intended behaviours and school learning), and took about 30 minutes to complete. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and analyses of variance were applied to check for potential school type differences where appropriate (see Niens and Reilly 2010 for details).

Findings are reported under five headings:

1. Aims of global citizenship,
2. Understandings of interdependence: Emotional engagement,
3. Attitudes to diversity: Humanisation,
4. School approaches and differences,
5. Implementing global citizenship: challenges and trends

## **Results**

### **Aims of global citizenship**

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<sup>1</sup> Designed in conjunction with staff from the Centre for Global Education and the Global Dimension in Schools (NI) project

Teachers interviewed expressed much enthusiasm about teaching global issues. In line with previous research (Holden 2006), pupil survey results also clearly indicated enjoyment of and engagement with global issues with 75% of pupils reporting that they enjoyed learning about it a bit or a lot and 80% stating that they sometimes or often thought about how people live in other parts of the world. Teachers' understandings of the aims of global citizenship education focused mainly on pupil engagement and awareness raising. Almost all teachers emphasised the "very insular" nature of Northern Ireland and hoped that teaching about global issues could open pupils' attitudes to other people, cultures and countries:

*"You are opening their eyes and opening their ears and opening all their senses to other cultures and if you can only give a fraction of that, because quite often it's not happening at home, it's not happening outside in their community...." Teacher, Controlled grammar school*

While this could be characterised as pragmatism, arguably it might be described as indicative of a lack of ambition, unlikely to result in the sort of challenges to identities, intergroup attitudes and an analysis of divergent perspectives which are integral to peace education (Salomon 2004). Indeed, developing superordinate identities was not mentioned by any of the teachers. Nevertheless, most thought that learning about global issues would positively impact on pupils' attitudes to diversity in the local and global context, although there was a parallel notion that for some pupils, increased awareness could reaffirm stereotypical views and local identities:

*"[...] definitely less conservative in their ideas in most cases. At the same time, I think there is a very small element that this has heightened their conservatism or heightened their sectarian views ..." Teacher, Maintained grammar school*

Findings were ambiguous with regard to whether or not pupils' community identities were challenged. Over half (53%) of pupils identified most strongly as 'Northern Irish' while

traditional identifications of Catholic and Protestant pupils with British or Irish identities were ranked first by only 25% of respondents. This accords with recent research that highlights growing popularity of the category ‘Northern Irish’ which has been described as a “common, superordinate ingroup” uniting Catholics and Protestants (Schmid et al. 2009, 464), although affiliation to this category does not necessarily alter support for a United Ireland or the Union with Great Britain (Trew 1998). However, local identities predominated, as only 4% of pupils identified most as ‘European people’, while 41% identified least with ‘People of the world’. Global citizenship education has been proposed as a tool to provide a superordinate identity which may bridge community divisions and ultimately contribute to peacebuilding in post-conflict societies (Davies 2005). While our findings clearly demonstrate teachers’ and pupils’ engagement and interest in global issues, they also suggest that the development of a global identity was not seen as a goal of global citizenship education and that local identities may remain unchallenged by teaching and learning. Considering the potential of global citizenship education to heal community divisions in South Africa, Staeheli and Hammett (2010, p. 24) caution that “... it is difficult to see how any of the different forms of cosmopolitanism can, on their own, counteract the experiences of violence and inequality that students and communities in divided societies have confronted”. This may be particularly questionable where critical discourse around different notions of local and global identities is absent and where the goal of global citizenship is limited to awareness raising.

### **Understandings of interdependence: Affective Engagement**

Teachers’ understandings of interdependence were often limited by a lack of articulation between local and the global dimensions, which was equally evident in pupil focus group

data reported elsewhere (Niens & Reilly 2012). However, all teachers interviewed reported that environmental issues were part of their curricular and extra-curricular activities and some used environmentalism as a lens to introduce the concept of global interdependence.

Clearly the perception that this was an uncontroversial way of introducing pupils to a global perspective, coupled with widely available NGO input into the classroom, made teaching about the environment appealing to some teachers. This also appeared to be the only topic where Freire's three elements of critical pedagogies, critical reflection, dialogue and action, were explicitly articulated and inter-linked by teachers:

*"So you are always teaching them the facts first... and then getting them to think beyond that. What's fact or opinion - looking at who is for conserving Antarctica, who is going to exploit it?" Teacher, Controlled secondary school*

This emphasis on the environment was echoed in pupils' survey responses, where 45% of pupils reported that they had learnt a lot about it. In relation to pupils' attitudes to environmental activism, the vast majority either agreed or strongly agreed that recycling rubbish (94%) and saving water (79%) make a difference for the environment locally and globally.

In contrast to the relative ease with which interviewees incorporated interdependence into teaching about the environment even at Primary level, some teachers saw economic and geopolitical interdependence as an unsuitable topic for younger pupils, or largely irrelevant to older ones:

*"I think that to an extent, especially the younger ones, it's somewhere else, it doesn't matter, it's not going to affect them. They very much live in a small world." Teacher, Maintained grammar school*

As such the dialogic discourse which permeated much of the widely discussed teaching about the environment was largely absent in the teacher data in relation to issues of trade, consumerism and debt, which usually only emerged when prompted. Even then, teachers often associated the global economy with the idea of pupils visiting other countries for holidays, future study or work opportunities, consistent with Roman's (2003) conception of consumption of cultural difference.

Challenging inequalities and oppression is central to dialogical approaches (Freire 1996, Giroux 1983), however, teachers' conceptualisations and the ways in which they addressed global power imbalances varied substantially. In many schools, global citizenship began with involvement in European exchange programmes and some interviews were clearly influenced by Eurocentric notions. While some teachers did not query this, a few expressed a desire to widen their scope:

*"Em, I think that to some extent Europe has been a comfort zone because it's relatively close and it's relatively similar and so on. Em, and what I would like us to do, em, is maybe to start and think about taking part in... a [global] North/South project." Teacher, Controlled Primary school*

Where global citizenship education was connected to the global South, it was almost always associated with fundraising, poverty and the desire to help and support those in need:

*"That fund raising would go in the direction of an African school... And I always thought it would be nice to have that sort of strong link with another school somewhere in Africa that we could support in some sort of way." Teacher, Controlled Primary school*

As Andreotti (2006) argues, such conceptualisations highlight the potential for stereotypical thinking and perpetuation of Eurocentric assumptions, again reflected in the pupil survey findings which indicated some naivety and an element of blame in relation to causes of global poverty. Bad governance was regarded as the most or second most

important cause of poverty by 60% of pupils, followed by war (40%), debts (35%), history of deprivation (27%), and colonial occupation (24%). In relation to potential solutions to poverty, 69% of respondents indicated that stopping wars and conflicts was the best or second best way to help poor countries, followed by 57% who rated increased trade of goods as the best or second best way and 51% who considered that giving poor countries money or cancelling debts was the best or second best way to help them.

Some teachers interviewed emphasised the importance of learning about and accepting one's responsibilities in a global context and this was related to political participation, consumerism and the environment. In line with Giroux's (1983) and Davies' (2006) calls for emotional engagement, one teacher saw such notions rooted in critical reflection and the search for underlying meanings, as well as a strong emotional reaction to inequality, which could precipitate activism and generalise to other areas:

*"You would hope that it would be built on as they get older and tackle the more difficult issues. That they would understand the underlying reasons for e.g. poverty in certain countries and that it's not just because the country is mismanaged, there is a lot more to do with it, and that would leave some sense of outrage in some, and a desire to be involved."*  
*Teacher, Maintained Primary school*

This quote clearly reflects the proposition that critical discourse and democratic engagement through education encourages students to challenge social inequalities and ultimately to transform society (Freire & Macedo 1995). However, this was a rather isolated testament to the potential impact of global citizenship learning. In addition, the pupil survey suggested that while respondents valued activism for change relating to the environment, economy and poverty, and were prepared to make lifestyle changes as a positive contribution to these issues, there was little evidence of strong emotional engagement or outrage. In relation to the economy, about two thirds of the sample (68%) agreed or strongly agreed that



buying Fair Trade chocolate helps to improve someone's life, while 84% agreed or strongly agreed that donating money for a country in crisis makes a difference for the people there. There was much less enthusiasm for taking part in demonstrations against child labour, with 60% agreeing that it wouldn't change anything anyway and another 16% being uncertain. Pupils' responses appeared to reflect their assessment of the effectiveness of economic and alternative responses to global poverty, with lifestyle changes seen as essential, charity donations as most effective and demonstrations as least effective.

It was also noteworthy that when teachers referred to activism it was usually related to extra-curricular activities (e.g. eco-clubs, environmental awareness groups and NGO supported groups). While this highlights the central role of schools in developing activism beyond, as well as through, the curriculum, research by McMurray and Niens (2012) indicates that in post-conflict societies with segregated education systems, vested community allegiances with specific NGOs and political agendas may limit the potential for citizenship education to bridge community divisions.

### **Attitudes to diversity: Humanisation**

By far the most prevalent issue that teachers included in their conceptualisations of global citizenship was respect for other cultures. This mainly referred to other countries or to immigrants in Northern Ireland, but only in a few cases was it associated with local Catholic/Protestant relations. Breaking down racial stereotypes was seen as a core issue of global citizenship and while a lack of ethnic diversity in the classroom was specifically lamented in rural schools, it was admitted that some local communities might not be tolerant towards incomers:

*“... we had no immigrant children and there aren’t as far as I know any immigrant families living within the village. There were some individuals who were ‘encouraged’ to leave the community...” Teacher, Controlled Primary school*

Wider community influences thus appeared to affect interviewees’ perceptions of what was possible and sensible to teach in the classroom. Although few teachers reported that they had experienced negative responses from parents, many more worried about potentially challenging locally prevalent attitudes. When asked about the main challenge of teaching in this area, a teacher from a rural Controlled Primary school in a very traditional area stated:

*“Obviously you’re not wanting to say, you know, to say, ‘Well your daddy or mummy’s wrong’”.*

These community influences as well as the more immediate classroom context appeared to contribute to a lack of confidence in teaching respect for other communities for some teachers, who found the controversial elements of this emotionally challenging, an acknowledged issue in dialogic approaches (Galtung 1996). One teacher in a school within a deprived urban area stated:

*“...their [pupils’] views are often very different to my views and they do have views that they bring from home and the outside world that, in terms of whether, you know... beliefs that they hold about different countries and nationalities that ethically sit very sharply with me. I find it very uncomfortable.” Teacher, Controlled secondary school*

Teachers therefore acknowledged the difficulties of addressing attitudes to diversity, and again the pupil data reflect this. A large majority of pupils said any European (73%), and any African (72%) should be allowed to come to Northern Ireland if there are jobs, and attitudes to immigrants moving into Northern Ireland were generally positive (40% supported

free entry to the country), however a sizeable minority of about a quarter of respondents demonstrated less liberal attitudes to both groups.

Some interviewees highlighted the need for sensitivity when dealing with the Northern Ireland conflict which in some communities remains an emotive issue (Cummings et al 2009). Children, who have not directly experienced the conflict and who may have little knowledge of historical facts, nevertheless may retain a strong community identity and concomitant feelings about historical and current events. One teacher from a rural school situated in an area relatively untouched by the conflict explained that they did not tackle community relations because they felt that their pupils held no prejudice and talking about it might introduce sectarian ideas:

*“...when we started doing a few things, it was nearly like we were putting ideas into their head [...]so, we kinda did to a certain extent step back a little bit from that...” Teacher, Maintained Primary school*

Concerns about introducing stereotypes and prejudiced thinking through classroom discussion particularly for young children have long been highlighted in the literature (Aboud & Doyle 1996). However, there is some evidence that critically engaged discussion about racism in early childhood classrooms actually moderates children’s attitudes (Katz 2003).

While avoidance of sensitive issues featured strongly in the interviews, echoing previous research in Northern Ireland (McCully 2006), some interviewees reported that changing demographics, the new curriculum and active teaching methods are more conducive to addressing global issues and diversity than was formerly the case:

*“[...] but now as society moves forward, it’s much more positive than it would have been. I think pupils now feel they have the space to express their opinion and be accepted so I think that is a positive thing.” Teacher, Controlled grammar school*

Linkages between sectarianism and racism were sometimes explicit but more frequently remained implicit, with pupils expected to extend and connect learning about treating migrants fairly to Catholic/ Protestant relationships in Northern Ireland. A few teachers explicitly used conflicts in other countries to address local divisions:

*“...as a teacher of Spanish I would, you know, discuss very explicitly with the pupils the difference between the Spanish culture and the separatist Basque area and their struggle for independence. So, we would compare that to the Northern Irish versus UK, Irish conflict.”*  
*Teacher Maintained grammar school*

Such connections between local and global conflict using critical reflection and discourse was rare but highlighted how global citizenship could use Freirean principles to bridge community divisions. Exploring representations of conflict in Canadian curricula and finding few explicit connections between local and global conflict in these policy documents, Bickmore (2006, 37) emphasises that “To contribute to citizenship education for democratic agency, explicit curriculum can and must delve into the unsafe but real world of social and political conflicts and injustices that defy simple negotiated settlement...” Our findings indicate that in the context of peacebuilding in post-conflict societies, global citizenship education practice cannot be disentangled from the complex nexus of tacit understandings of the rules, norms and tensions that characterise existing local intra and inter-community relationships. However, critical pedagogies may be crucial to enable explicit negotiation of such issues through dialogue and reflection, which may enable action and ultimately, societal transformation for peacebuilding.

### **School approaches and differences**

Although we cannot generalise from either sample, the data suggested that while teachers in all sectors reported similar aims, approaches appeared to differ by school sector in ways

consistent with school ethos and traditions and which broadly appeared consistent with Veugeler's (2011a) categorisation of global citizenship education.

Reflecting an 'open global citizenship' approach (Veugelers 2011b) which emphasises learning about other countries and openness to new experiences, teachers in Controlled Protestant schools often focused on the development of international links and projects but rarely mentioned an ethos driving the whole sector to incorporate a community relations or charitable focus. In Controlled Post-Primary schools, these international links appeared to be explicitly oriented towards employability:

*"... if they [pupils] want to do a degree or such like that their direct competitors are people in India [...] I try regularly to let them know that they are possibly not looking for jobs in NI but for jobs somewhere in the world in the future because that's what is going to have to happen." Teacher, Controlled grammar school*

Extension of employability concerns to other countries might present opportunities to challenge stereotypes of the Global South as poverty-stricken and to develop more differentiated understandings of global power relationships. While pupils attending Controlled schools were less likely than those from other sectors to rate learning about African countries, other European countries, and diversity as important (Table 1), the survey did not focus extensively on pupils' economic understandings and attitudes to international employability and this may be an area for future research.

Moral global citizenship centres around appreciating diversity, increasing opportunities and taking responsibility towards humanity (Veugelers 2011a). This appeared consistent with approaches in the Maintained Catholic sector, where the prevailing ethos included historical associations with international missionary work and charitable traditions (Montgomery & Smith 1997). A teacher from a Maintained Primary school explained:

*“I suppose it’s part of your religion program to do that [global issues] throughout Lent, to make children aware that there are people suffering out there, so it comes from the religious aspect first in respect of Christianity. Then as a Christian you have a duty to look after these other people and yes it is done on a global dimension.”*

Global responsibility thus featured highly in teacher understandings in the Catholic Maintained sector. The pupil survey data also indicated that pupils attending Maintained schools were significantly more likely than those attending Controlled schools to welcome migrants to Northern Ireland and to view the international community, the government and every individual as responsible for solving conflict and supporting peace. They also consistently reported learning more about global issues in school than pupils in other sectors (Table 1). While Veugelers noted that a moral approach applied not only at global but also at local level, a focus on local community divisions in relation to the past conflict was less evident in the Catholic Maintained school findings emerging from our data.

This dimension was however emphasised in the Integrated school sector, where the global dimension was seen as inherent in an existing ethos of promoting diversity and respect (McGlynn 2011), first and foremost regarding Catholic and Protestant relations, but extending to other minority cultures within Northern Ireland. One teacher from an Integrated Post-Primary school explained:

*“...by the very nature of being Integrated, we acknowledge differences, we accept differences and we celebrate sameness as well as diversity...”*

Challenging prejudice was thus one of the focal points for teachers interviewed in Integrated schools. Pupil survey data revealed that pupils in Integrated schools were significantly more likely than others to believe that it was important to learn about conflict resolution in school (Table 1). Similar to Veugelers’ (2011a) research in the Netherlands,

there was little consistent evidence of social-political global citizenship, which may mirror most closely Freirean notions of critical pedagogies for social transformation, though a few teachers indicated some recognition of such an approach. In a divided educational system it may be expected that different sectors approach global citizenship in ways that are consistent with existing practices. While different approaches might potentially exacerbate community divisions, these differences in expertise clearly present opportunities for collaborative work between the sectors, allowing teachers to learn from each other. Gallagher (2005b, 166) highlights that learning within separate school sectors begs the challenge of a lack of “diversity in terms of experience and perspective” and this clearly seems to refer not only to issues of local but also of global relevance. Gallagher warns that it would be simplistic to argue that separate schools are solely responsible for maintaining societal divisions, but the opportunities presented by cross-sector partnerships should not be neglected, given they provide a context where alternative perspectives can be explored and critical discourses developed using a dialogic approach. Such collaborations had already been experienced by some interviewees who highlighted their benefits:

*“Em, we have stayed very good friends, but all that [school collaboration] has been beneficial for us ... who are at different schools in the same town, it gave us opportunities to walk in and out of each other’s schools, you know, and bring students across to each other’s schools, so it helps break down some of those barriers.” Teacher, Integrated Post-Primary school*

School partnerships have proliferated in Northern Ireland in recent years and shared education has been firmly incorporated into public and policy discourses around education (Connolly, Purvis & O’Grady 2013), whereby its potential to contribute to community relations has gained increasing public acknowledgement. Recognising the potential of sharing between sectors for peacebuilding is important not only directly with regards to reconciliation

(Hughes et al 2010) but also indirectly regarding the hidden curriculum, which otherwise may impact differentially on teaching and learning between sectors.

### **Implementing global citizenship: challenges and trends**

Some schools took a structured approach to global issues in teaching and learning, but others relied on analysis and extension of their existing provision and activities in order to limit additional demands on teaching staff. One teacher explained:

*“But I mean they are already covering [it], the work’s already being done, so we just need them maybe to make the pupils more aware of where or how it is connecting globally”.*

*Teacher, Maintained grammar school*

While this approach had the advantage of alleviating staff concerns, there was limited evidence of additional time being provided to develop a knowledge base, which might inform critical discourses in the classroom and thus contribute to a dialogic development of understandings around global citizenship. In fact, lack of time was one of the most frequently reported challenges, whether for identifying relevant resources and training opportunities, for critical reflection and or dialogue with colleagues. Many teachers accepted that global issues were becoming embedded in resources but bemoaned the lack of available lesson plans that could minimise preparation on their part, calling into question their level of commitment to critical engagement with global issues.

Some interviewees expressed concerns that the current curriculum is overloaded and were sceptical about adding local and global citizenship as yet another subject or initiative for which they would be accountable, with a dearth of specific training and materials. Other teachers did not see this as an obstacle:



*“But, specific training, no, nothing is available that I’m aware of. We just muddle through ourselves and, and try and progress and bring in as many ideas together. But we’re confident, we don’t feel under supported, we feel we are happy, I think there’s a lot out there....”*

*Teacher, Controlled grammar school*

In the absence of training opportunities and given time pressures, such confidence may be misplaced. Teacher knowledge and experience are clearly invaluable; however, these alone seem an insecure basis for the development of critical discourses in classrooms. Freire (1987) suggests that teachers need more than subject knowledge and methodological expertise; they must develop a clear political understanding of the issues explored, which necessitates time for critical reflection and opportunities for discourses amongst teachers themselves.

In some schools, little changed over the year between interviews, while others reported specific changes, for example, one school had moved to a new building, others had experienced significant staff changes, or a rapid expansion in enrolment or had begun to offer new examinations. In another school, the retirement of a particularly supportive principal led to a marked reduction in global citizenship activities and teacher attitudes and discussions were notably more muted than in the previous year, underlining the importance of senior management support for such initiatives (Osler 2008).

At Post-Primary level, several schools had adopted a more strategic approach to global citizenship which seemed largely curriculum-led. This was less evident at Primary level where teachers expressed uncertainty about expectations for teaching global issues:

*“Government wise, I think they kind of want us to do it, but there’s very little direction, it’s kind of put out there as, like, a big wish, we would like you to bring the global dimension in,*

*but they're not specifically saying do this, do that[...]" Teacher, Maintained urban Primary school*

A few teachers discussed the need to politicise issues such as poverty and to take a more critical approach, and one noted development in their own understanding of global issues, illustrating the potential of critical pedagogies and training to promote learning and improve teaching practices:

*"I would have done it[Africa] as a 'mud huts' aspect of it, which is wrong, you know, so I think for me personally, for me that's one area you know I've probably changed my own opinion and the way I would teach that to the children..." Teacher, Controlled Primary school*

Over the course of the year, there was little evidence of any systematic development of organisational or pedagogical approaches; rather the picture was one of isolated change in response to situational factors. Coupled with the structural limitations on practice such as limited time, limited teacher knowledge and experience and perhaps equally importantly the contextual limitations of a divided and post conflict society, there was little evidence for development of critical dialogic pedagogies, nor of emotional engagement that might challenge the status quo.

## **Conclusions**

In the context of a post-conflict society, this paper explored how Freirean principles of critical reflection, dialogue and action are evidenced in teachers' and pupils' understandings of global citizenship education, the roles identities, humanisation and emotional engagement play in this and

how different school sectors may approach it. In the following, we revisit the research questions to discuss the findings in the light of the theoretical framework.

### **How do teacher and pupil understandings of and attitudes to global citizenship reflect Freirean concepts of critical reflection, dialogue and action?**

Despite teachers' and pupils' enthusiasm for teaching and learning about global issues, which echoed previous research evidence (Edge, Khamsi & Bourn 2008), Freirean concepts of critical reflection, dialogue and action were only rarely evident in teacher interviews and reflected in pupils' questionnaire responses. Lack of time for teaching, researching and reflection was seen as a major impediment to implementing global citizenship education effectively. This, coupled with a lack of relevant training, appeared to result in many teachers adopting an instrumental approach which Winter (2007) referring to Education for Sustainable Development, noted did not enable critical reflection.

While environmental issues had universal appeal, demonstrated by sound understandings of inter-relationships between local action and global impact which were expressed in pupils' sense of efficacy, such understandings were not reliably translated into other areas of global citizenship. As such, the potential role of environmental learning as an entry point should be considered, not only for understanding interdependence, but also for developing skills of critical engagement, discourse and activism which could be applied to less well-developed areas such as trade, consumerism and debt. Dunlap and Van Liere (2008) argue that while the environmental paradigm has become widely accepted, critical analysis of wider issues of economic growth and impact are needed to effectively challenge the status quo.

**What roles do humanisation and emotional engagement play in teachers' conceptualisations of global citizenship education and to what extent is this reflected in pupils' attitudes and understandings?**

Avoidance of engagement with issues relating to inequalities and power imbalances was particularly evident with regards to understandings of the concept of interdependence as well as conflict and continuing divisions in Northern Ireland. Humanisation was evident in some teachers' pedagogical approaches to global citizenship, while emotional engagement emerged in other teachers' approaches, but only rarely did the two co-exist. There also appeared to be a dichotomy between teachers who regarded addressing diversity and conflict as essential, and those preferring to concentrate on common humanity. While the latter approach has been considered inadequate to challenge global inequalities by theorists such as Parekh (2003) and Andreotti (2006), the former may fail to address the development of a superordinate identity that has been considered essential to global citizenship and peacebuilding education (Nussbaum 1996). In fact, neither teachers' nor pupils' understandings of global citizenship indicated reconsideration of locally divided identities or the development of superordinate identities, which could bridge local and global community divisions. Global citizenship education for peacebuilding needs to go beyond advocacy of tolerance and common humanity to include critical reflection about the socially constructed meanings of identities and communities and their implications for societies (Bekerman 2009). According to Freire (1996) and Giroux (1983), critical pedagogy requires critical reflection, critical dialogue and action, underpinned by humanisation and emotional engagement, to achieve societal transformation. Thus, global citizenship should combine critical reflection and discourse on local identities and common humanity in order to promote peacebuilding at local and global levels.

**Do approaches to global citizenship education map onto Veugelers' categorisation and do they vary systematically by school sector? To what extent are potential variations reflected in pupils' attitudes and understandings?**

In the context of education for peacebuilding, we argue that a lack of critical engagement with issues of identity and conflict may be compounded by different approaches to global citizenship education in the various school sectors. While the sample included all main school types in Northern Ireland, it was not representative. However, teacher and pupil findings suggested divergence between school sectors with different emphases on local community relations, charitable work and employability. Our findings are broadly consistent with the three approaches to global citizenship education identified by Veugelers (2011a), namely open, moral (including a local element) and socio-political. However, our data suggest that in Northern Ireland as a post-conflict society, the local element of the moral approach described by Veugelers (2011b) assumes a high level of importance. We therefore argue that a fourth category may be needed to describe an approach to global citizenship in post-conflict societies which is inclusive of local identities and divisions.

Despite the widespread abandonment of what Freire (1970) termed a banking system of education, it has been noted that tensions between reproductive and transformative agendas of citizenship education remain (Johnson & Morris 2010). Societal divisions may be both reflected in and reproduced by educational structures and policies; the boundaries and limitations these impose appear to translate into teachers' and pupils' understandings of global citizenship. We argue that this demonstrates how critical pedagogies can be restricted by structural and social boundaries as well as by more mundane time and resource concerns. As such our research indicates that it may be necessary for teachers to transcend these boundaries in the first place, to engage in critical discourse beyond their own bounded school and local communities and to engage in cross-sector collaborations in order to facilitate

critical reflection and discourse amongst their pupils, which may eventually transform society. The recent incorporation of shared education in Northern Irish policy (Connolly et al 2013) should provide opportunities for teachers to engage in such collaboration.

Shultz (2009, 10) stresses the need for global citizenship education to address both conflict and complexity. While acknowledging the long tradition of educators committed to social justice and peace education she nevertheless cautions that, *“History has demonstrated that educators become the foot soldiers of oppressive policy and regimes when they become compliant and disengaged (or perhaps distracted) through excessive accountability agendas, top-down reform discourses, and efficiency demands... resulting in schools becoming places where society is learned rather than created.”*

Based on the findings in our research, we believe that changes within the education system to allow spaces for critical reflection, training and cross-school collaborations will not in themselves guarantee critical discourses relating to local and global issues taking place in the classroom and societal divisions being transformed. There is in the first instance a need for teachers to develop some sense of emotional engagement, to recognise and challenge existing structural and contextual limitations, in order to provide an opening to transformative learning amongst teachers and students and thereby to contribute to peacebuilding in society.

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**Table 1: Analysis of variance to test for denominational school type differences**

Question	Item	Group (N)	Mean	SD	Df	F
How important is it to learn about the following?  Response format from 1 (not important at all) to 10 (extremely important)	How people live in other European countries (e.g. their history, traditions, music, food)	Controlled (144)	5.50	2.47	2	6.48***
		Maintained (168)	6.46	2.49		
		Integrated (57)	6.39	2.38		
	How people live in other continents such as Africa or Asia (e.g. their history, traditions, music, food)	Controlled (143)	5.51	2.57	2	4.99***
		Maintained (166)	6.21	2.39		
		Integrated (56)	6.61	2.60		
	Differences and similarities between people and groups	Controlled (141)	6.01	2.70	2	4.88***
		Maintained (168)	6.81	2.50		
		Integrated (55)	7.07	2.77		
	Conflict resolution	Controlled (143)	6.14	2.80	2	4.26*
		Maintained (158)	6.86	2.90		
		Integrated (53)	7.34	2.80		
If there is conflict between groups or nations...  Response format from 1 (agree strongly) to 4 (disagree strongly)	It is the responsibility of the international community to solve them	Controlled (192)	2.49	.70	2	3.58*
		Maintained (112)	2.21	.81		
		Integrated (30)	2.37	.72		
	It is the responsibility of our government to solve them	Controlled (105)	2.26	.83	2	6.69***
		Maintained (120)	2.64	.81		
		Integrated (30)	2.62	.85		
	It is everybody's responsibility to support peace, e.g. through economic boycotts, demonstrations	Controlled (103)	1.98	.73	2	5.31**
		Maintained (121)	1.64	.77		
		Integrated (30)	1.77	.90		
How do you feel about people from other countries coming to live in Northern Ireland?  Response format from 1 (anybody from there should be allowed to come here for work) to 4 (Nobody from there should be allowed to come here for work)	European countries	Controlled (155)	2.76	.93	2	11.70***
		Maintained (81)	3.25	.89		
		Integrated (61)	3.02	1.04		
	Africa countries	Controlled (156)	2.80	1.01	2	9.95***
		Maintained (181)	3.27	.89		
		Integrated (56)	3.02	.99		

*Note: Post-hoc analysis through Bonferroni, where equal variances could be assumed, or Dunnett C, where homogeneity of variance tests were significant. \* significance level <.05, \*\* significance level <.01, \*\*\* significance level <.001*